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ABSTRACT

A synthesis and summary of the recommendations of the following five reports are presented: (1) "Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community, The Findings and Recommendations of the Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees," by the Association of American Colleges, February 1985; (2) "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education," by the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, October 1984; (3) "Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools, a Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by its Commission for Educational Quality," 1985; (4) "Access to Quality Undergraduate Education, a Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by its Commission for Educational Quality," 1985; and (5) "To Reclaim a Legacy," a report written by William J. Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and based on the findings of the Study Group on the State of Learning in the Humanities in Higher Education, 1984. The recommendations are synthesized and summarized in the following chapters: "Recommendations about Resource Allocation and Funding Mechanisms"; "Recommendations about the Faculty Reward System and Incentives"; "Recommendations about Priorities for Improving Undergraduate Education" (providing access and remediation, increasing student involvement, and improving teacher education); "Recommendations about Curriculum and Faculty"; "Recommendations about Accountability" (regarding institutional effectiveness, regulatory and quality controls, and student assessment and program evaluation); "Summary of the Recommendations in Tabular Format"; and "Working Party on Effective State Action to Improve Undergraduate Education." (KM)

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# FIVE REPORTS:
## SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF RECENT COMMISSION REPORTS ON IMPROVING UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

No. PS-85-3

By
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**December 1985**

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# FOREWORD

It is time to raise the level of debate about the condition of undergraduate education in America's public colleges and universities. It is time to reconsider state policies that helped build the largest and most open system in the world but now, ironically, threaten to undermine efforts to improve it. It is time to build creative partnerships between state policy makers and higher education leaders capable of adjusting both policies and institutions to new clients, higher expectations and more troubling demands.

With this in mind, as 1985-86 chairman of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), I have initiated a three-year project, entitled "Effective State Action To Improve Undergraduate Education." This ECS project is guided by a working party of 20 political and education leaders. The working party met for the first time on December 3-4, 1985, in Princeton, New Jersey, to discuss the urgency of this issue for the nation.

In the past 15 months, several national commissions, task forces and study groups have released recommendations on improving undergraduate education. To inform the discussion of the members of the working party, Carol M. Boyer, ECS senior policy analyst, prepared this two-part analysis of five of the reports. First, using a typology created specifically for this ECS project, she presents a synthesis of the recommendations of the five reports. Then, using the same typology, she presents a summary of the recommendations in tabular format.

Boyer's analysis promises to be a useful tool for all who are interested in improving undergraduate education.

**Thomas H. Kean**
**Governor of New Jersey**
**1985-86 Chairman**
**Education Commission**
**of the States**

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# THE FIVE REPORTS

Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. The Findings and Recommendations of the Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees, Association of American Colleges, February 1985 (The AAC report).

Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education. Washington, D.C.: Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, National Institute of Education/U.S. Department of Education, October 1984 (The NIE report).

Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools. A Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by its Commission for Educational Quality, 1985a (The SREB report, 1985a).

Access to Quality Undergraduate Education. A Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by its Commission for Educational Quality, 1985b (The SREB report, 1985b).

To Reclaim a Legacy. Washington, D. C.: A report written by William J. Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and based on the findings of the Study Group on the State of Learning in the Humanities in Higher Education, 1984 (The NEH report).

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# INTRODUCTION

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Improving quality and excellence in undergraduate education is receiving intensified attention these days, as evidenced by the reports of several national commissions, task forces, and study groups. All of the reports reviewed here are concerned with improving undergraduate education, although the specific areas of concern vary from one report to another.

- The NIE report focuses on what should be done to encourage efforts that promote student involvement and institutional assessment.
- The AAC report focuses, as its title suggests, on redefining the meaning and purpose of baccalaureate degrees.
- The NEH report focuses exclusively on the humanities and what should be done to improve their place in higher education.
- The SREB reports focus on efforts to improve teacher education and remediation programs as well as undergraduate education, broadly defined.

7

# RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

8

The role that states should play, through resource allocation and funding mechanisms, to improve undergraduate education is addressed in the NIE and SREB reports and receives some attention in the AAC report, but is not addressed at all in the NEH report.

As to how such improvement should be made, the NIE report recommends the establishment of special and alternative funding for both public and private institutions. It also calls on state legislatures and boards of trustees to reverse the decline in faculty purchasing power by increasing faculty salaries at a rate greater than inflation.

The SREB reports not only recommend the use of financial rewards and a separate category of state appropriations, but also call for such appropriations to be based on program quality rather than on enrollment-driven formulas. They further recommend the use of loans, scholarships, and other funding mechanisms to attract and encourage better students (including qualified minorities) to pursue teaching careers.

Both the NIE and the AAC reports recommend the allocation of state and federal funds to support research on how to facilitate greater student learning and development, and to support the development of reliable instruments for student assessment and program evaluation.

The NIE report encourages colleges and universities to consolidate as many part-time teaching lines into full-time positions as possible and to reallocate faculty and other institutional resources toward increased service to first- and second-year students. The AAC report encourages college and university departments to consider allocating one or two regular faculty positions to research on teaching and learning in their discipline.

9

# Recommendations About the Faculty Reward System and Incentives

10

The reports all include specific recommendations for improving the faculty reward system and incentives, although the appropriate state role in such efforts is much less clear. One might infer, however, that an appropriate role for states would be to find ways to encourage colleges and universities to make the recommended changes.

The NIE report calls on those responsible for faculty personnel decisions not only to increase the weight given to teaching in the processes of hiring and determining retention, tenure, promotion, and compensation, but also to improve means of assessing teaching effectiveness. Similarly, the AAC report, the SREB reports, and the NEH report all concur that the faculty reward system should be modified to accommodate good teaching as well as good research. The NEH report specifically challenges college and university presidents to consider rewarding excellent teaching as well as good research, in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions.

The SREB reports take a somewhat different tack, recommending not only that faculty be rewarded for their service to the public schools and to the broader community, but also that different forms of activity be valued in the faculty reward system. Examples of such activity include the development of knowledge directly related to practical and current problems in the public schools, and scholarship that directly improves the teaching of undergraduates by developing better ways to organize, understand, and present the knowledge of a discipline.

The AAC report further recommends that colleges and universities find ways to celebrate superb teaching, to draw attention to successful teaching practices that are capable of broader applications, and to encourage faculty to revive their "corporate responsibility" to the undergraduate curriculum.

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# Recommendations About Priorities for Improving Undergraduate Education

**Providing Access and Remediation**

12 The SREB reports have the most to say about the role that states should play with regard to providing access and remediation. Providing access is also among the topics covered in the NIE report, but it is not addressed in either the AAC report or the NEH report.

The SREB reports recommend that states require colleges and universities to establish statewide standards for placement in college-level courses that count toward an undergraduate degree. They further recommend that colleges and universities should allow credit toward graduation only for college-level courses, and not for courses that focus on high-school skills and content.

Similarly, the NIE report calls on colleges and universities to offer remedial courses and programs when necessary but to set standards and to employ instructional techniques in those programs that will enable students to perform well subsequently in college-level courses.

The SREB reports recommend that content guidelines, outcomes standards, and assessment programs be developed (and applied statewide) that, at a minimum, reflect the skills needed to begin college-level study. They further recommend not only that states devote special attention to the preparation of minorities for success in high school and college, but also that states ensure that those students not qualified to begin college-level study have geographical access to programs that will prepare them to qualify.

Finally, the SREB reports urge colleges and universities to work closely with the public schools in four areas:

1. defining and publicizing the nature of courses that should be taken and the academic skills that should be developed to prepare for college;

2. developing early assessments of the skills of high school students to identify performance levels that indicate students will not be able to meet the standards to qualify for college-level work;

3. developing the capacity to intervene in and enrich the programs of high school students who are projected not to meet the college placement criteria; and

4. informing each public school district of the college-level performance of its graduates, especially the numbers requiring remedial work before placement in college-level courses.

**Increasing Student Involvement**

Given its title, the NIE report should be expected to have the most to say about increasing student involvement, and it does. Interestingly, however, it does not describe what role states should play in such efforts. The AAC report also includes recommendations that relate, albeit sometimes indirectly, to increasing student involvement, but neither of the SREB reports nor the NEH report addresses this topic.

Both the NIE and the AAC reports emphasize the need for good student advising throughout the undergraduate experience, but the NIE report is more specific. It calls on colleges and universities to offer a systematic program of student guidance and advisement, with full and continuing participation of student affairs personnel, peer counselors, faculty, and administrators. The NIE report also recommends that a faculty task force be asked to explore what is currently known about learning and what practices have been developed to best support a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning.

The NIE report recommends that colleges and universities strive to create learning communities that are organized around specific themes. It further recommends that learning technologies be designed to increase the amount of personal contact between students and faculty on intellectual issues.

The AAC report takes a somewhat different approach. It recommends that students and faculty be encouraged to integrate the course of study with the extracurriculum and the cultural environment. In addition, the AAC report recommends that colleges and universities find ways and encourage students to integrate community service, political participation, and

other opportunities for civic responsibility in their undergraduate programs.

The AAC report further recommends that colleges and universities consider ways of interacting with business and industry, government, the arts, and the professions to strengthen the undergraduate experience for students. Examples of such interactions include writers or artists in-residence, temporary or interim faculty appointments for "outsiders," work-study and career-education programs, and business and government internships.

**Improving Teacher Education**

One of the SREB reports (1985a) is devoted entirely to improving teacher education, and eight of its some 20 recommendations specify an appropriate role for states to play in such endeavors. Three of the eight recommendations have important and far-reaching implications for state policy.

1. The governor of each state should appoint an ad hoc group to promote reforms in teacher education programs in the public institutions within that state, and to guide and monitor improvements in teacher education as well as in certification regulations.

2. Improvement in teacher preparation must become an urgent agenda item for higher education coordinating agencies or governing boards as well as for college and university presidents.

3. Along with colleges and universities, states should explore alternative teacher education and certification models that emphasize the development of professional teaching skills primarily in the school classroom setting and that open teaching to a wider range of talented students.

The SREB report recommends that states expect colleges and universities to adopt a set of standards for basic academic skills and levels of proficiency that are common statewide and that all students should meet by the end of the sophomore year and before beginning upper-division study. It further recommends that students be expected to exceed these threshold requirements, whose central purpose would be to provide a basis for accountability and a foundation upon which individual institutions can construct higher standards. (Note: This set of recommendations might just as easily have appeared in either of two other sections, "Recommendations about Accountability" or "Providing Access and Remediation," but is included here because of its emphasis on improving teacher education.)



At least another eight of the SREB recommendations focus on ways of examining and improving different aspects of the teacher education curriculum, from consolidating "methods" courses, to redesigning introductory or "foundations" courses on the history, philosophy, and sociology of education, to prescribing acceptable general or liberal education courses for all education majors, to providing more and better opportunities for students to gain first-hand classroom-teaching experience.

The SREB report also recommends that, without lowering the minimum standards for admission into colleges of education, efforts now be directed to attract students who more than meet such minimum criteria. It further recommends not only that selective research universities, which tend to attract the more talented students, reemphasize preservice preparation of teachers but also that leaders in minority communities mount a comprehensive campaign to recruit qualified minority students into teaching careers. Finally, the SREB report recommends that all education faculty whose courses deal with teaching and learning have prolonged and regular contacts with the public schools.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM AND FACULTY

All of the reports generally concur that the undergraduate curriculum needs to be reexamined, but the intended purpose and outcomes of such activity vary from one report to another.

As might be expected, given that it is "a report to the academic community," the AAC report has much to say about who should be involved, what should be considered, and what the intended outcomes should be. More specifically, it calls on institutional leaders to exercise their responsibility for identifying the curricular issues that require attention and for shaping a strategy to move their faculties to responsible action. The AAC report also recommends, however, that colleges and universities ensure that their curriculum committee is "a vehicle of institutional integrity and purpose."

The AAC report further specifies that it is the responsibility of the college or university curriculum committee to

1. consider in a systematic way the curricular structure as a whole and seriously ask whether the curriculum as experienced by students meets either the institution's defined goals or general goals that are rational, socially healthy, and appropriate;

2. keep the curricular structure and goals from being bent out of shape by a too-ready acquiescence to the ambitions of every faculty special interest group; and

3. challenge some of the fundamental assumptions and practices of the academy.

Similarly, even though it focuses exclusively on the place of humanities in the undergraduate curriculum, the NEH report recommends that each college or university ensure that its undergraduate curriculum reflects the best judgment of the president, deans, and faculty about what an educated person ought to know. It further recommends that the choices each college or university makes for its common curriculum be rooted in its institutional identity and educational purpose, yet it also acknowledges that there are "standards of judgment" and that "some things are more important to know than others."

The AAC report recommends that colleges and universities develop a minimum required curriculum for all undergraduate students that includes nine essential elements. It further recommends that divisions or departments within these institutions be charged with redesigning old courses and designing new ones that are consistent with the goals and experiences of the minimum required curriculum for all undergraduate students.

The NIE report agrees that each institution should examine and adjust the content and delivery of the curriculum to match the knowledge, capacities, and skills it expects students to develop. Rather than call for a minimum required curriculum like the AAC report, however, the NIE report recommends that all bachelor's degree recipients have at least two full years of liberal education.

The AAC report recommends that colleges and universities ensure that every requirement for "study in depth" is intellectually defensible. It further recommends that these institutions consider a variety of ways in which faculty can fulfill their responsibilities to the undergraduate curriculum and that emphasis be placed on opportunities for active learning.

Similarly, the NEH report recommends that colleges and universities ensure that the best professors teach introductory and lower-division courses, and that these courses be designed for the nonmajor as part of a coherent curriculum. It further recommends that study of the humanities not be limited to the freshman and sophomore years, but extend throughout the entire undergraduate experience. Finally, the NEH report recommends that faculty members be as concerned with teaching nonmajors as they are with signing up departmental majors.

One of the SREB reports (1985b) recommends that colleges and universities examine their undergraduate curriculum and recast a core of required studies. It recommends that basic academic skills such as reading and writing be expected and practiced across all segments of the curriculum, and that the humanities and sciences constitute a major segment of the undergraduate core curriculum.

The NEH report concurs. It recommends that graduates be conversant with the best that has been thought and written about the human condition. It further recommends that faculty members ensure that their teaching makes the humanities come alive by helping students confront great texts, great minds, and great ideas. The NEH report even goes so far as to identify significant works and authors to whom all students should be exposed.

In contrast to the other reports, the SREB report calls for interinstitutional cooperation, recommending that faculty from two-year and four-year institutions develop the undergraduate core curriculum jointly. It also recommends that exemplary reforms be encouraged and replicated, and that institutions compare the success of transfer students to that of students who began their studies at a four-year institution.

The NIE report further specifies that liberal education requirements be expanded and reinvigorated to ensure that (a) curricular content is directly addressed not only to subject matter but also to the development of capacities of analysis, problem-solving, communication, and synthesis, and (b) students and faculty integrate knowledge from various disciplines.

Finally, the NIE report recommends that the faculty and chief academic officers in each institution agree upon and disseminate a statement of the knowledge, capacities, and skills that students must develop prior to graduation. The SREB report concurs, as does the NEH report, which recommends that college and university presidents take firm stands on what their institutions regard as essential knowledge.

As for recommendations about college and university faculty, all of the reports except the two SREB reports have something specific to offer. The AAC report recommends that the profession of college teaching assert the set of skills and obligations necessary to its practice, and that the Ph.D. candidate be introduced in a systematic way to the profession of teaching. It further recommends that colleges and universities demonstrate their commitment to teaching by offering a program that helps new faculty to improve their teaching.

The NIE report recommends that, to balance the specialization of graduate training in the disciplines, graduate departments require applicants for admission to present evidence of a broad undergraduate liberal education. It also recommends that graduate deans and department chairs develop ways of helping prospective faculty in all disciplines to learn about the history, organization, and culture of American higher education, and to expand their understanding of teaching and learning.

The NEH report recommends that college and university departments ensure that, in addition to being trained as researchers and scholars, their graduate students are prepared to teach undergraduates. It further recommends that college and university departments ensure both that their graduate students are broadly educated in fields of knowledge other than their primary one and that, as scholars, they are able to ask questions of wide significance as well as pursue research of narrow scope.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Regarding Institutional Effectiveness**

The AAC report recommends that colleges and universities be held accountable for demonstrating effectiveness in each of three areas (students, programs, and faculty) to state legislatures, students, and the public at large. It also urges accrediting agencies and boards of trustees to ask searching questions about whether academic programs are of high quality and consonant with the institutional mission.

The NIE report calls for accountability of a different kind. It recommends that college presidents strive to ensure that the behavior of their institutions evidences the ideals of honesty, justice, freedom, equality, generosity, and respect for others — the necessary values of community. Similarly, the NEH report recommends that college and university presidents set an intellectual tone for their institutions, articulating goals and ideals.

**Regarding Regulatory and Quality Controls**

Here the NIE report recommends that state and system-level officials minimize the intrusions of administrative and fiscal agencies into the daily and routine operations of public colleges, community colleges, and universities. It recommends further that accrediting agencies hold colleges, community colleges, and universities accountable for clear statements of expectations for student learning, appropriate assessment programs to determine whether those expectations are being met, and systematic efforts to improve learning as a result of those assessments.

**Regarding Student Assessment and Program Evaluation**

The AAC report recommends that colleges and universities be held accountable for developing reliable instruments for student assessment and program evaluation, and establish joint trustee-faculty-student committees on assessment to oversee the legitimate interests and responsibilities of each group. It recommends further that college and university curriculum committees engage in a continuing assessment of the quality of teaching in their institutions.



The NIE report concurs on the importance of assessment. It recommends that faculty and academic deans design and implement a systematic program to assess the knowledge, capacities, and skills developed in students by academic and cocurricular programs. It further recommends that community colleges, colleges, and universities supplement the credit system with proficiency assessments both in liberal education and in the student's major as a condition of awarding degrees.

For academic administrators and faculty involved in changing current systems of assessment, the NIE report recommends that they ensure that the instruments and methods used are appropriate for (a) the knowledge, capacities, and skills addressed, and (b) the stated objectives of undergraduate education at their institutions. It further recommends that faculty participate in the development, adoption, administration, and scoring of the instruments and procedures used in student assessment and, in the process, be trained in the ways of using assessment as a teaching tool.

As for program evaluation, the NIE report recommends that student evaluations of academic programs and the learning environment be conducted regularly and the results be widely disseminated as a basis for strengthening the quality of undergraduate education.

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# SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN TABULAR FORMAT

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

### The NIE Report

What states should do

- establish special funding for efforts in public and private institutions to promote student involvement and institutional assessment
- reverse decline in faculty purchasing power by increasing faculty salaries at a rate greater than inflation
- focus funding strategies on how to facilitate greater student learning and development

What colleges and universities should do

- encourage departments to consolidate part-time teaching lines into full-time positions
- focus funding strategies and research activities on how to facilitate greater student learning and development
- reallocate faculty and other institutional resources toward increased service to first- and second-year students

### The AAC Report

What states should do

- support development of reliable instruments for program evaluation and student assessment

What colleges and universities should do

- encourage departments to allocate one or two regular faculty positions to research on teaching and learning in the discipline

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FUNDING MECHANISMS (Continued)**

| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| Not applicable (hereafter N/A) | (N/A) | • give financial rewards to institutions for program improvement<br>• base appropriations on program quality, not on enrollments<br>• develop quality-based funding for teacher-education programs<br>• use scholarships and loans to encourage top students to pursue teaching careers<br>• establish financial incentives to encourage qualified minority students to pursue teaching careers<br>• give financial rewards to institutions for making major curriculum and structural changes in teacher-education programs | (N/A) |

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT THE FACULTY REWARD SYSTEM AND INCENTIVES

22

### The NIE Report

What states should do

(N/A)

What colleges and universities should do

- increase weight given to teaching in hiring, retention, promotion, tenure, and compensation decisions
- improve means of assessing teaching effectiveness
- define scholarship broadly and require faculty to demonstrate that scholarship

### The AAC Report

What states should do

- encourage colleges and universities to modify faculty-reward systems in ways that accommodate good teaching as well as good research

What colleges and universities should do

- celebrate superb teaching and draw attention to successful teaching practices
- encourage faculty to revive their corporate responsibility to the undergraduate curriculum

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT THE FACULTY REWARD SYSTEM AND INCENTIVES (Continued)**

| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| (N/A) | • ensure that excellent teaching as well as good research is rewarded in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions | (N/A) | • revise faculty-reward systems to emphasize and recognize effective undergraduate teaching<br>• establish contacts with, and reward faculty for their service to, the public schools<br>• reward faculty scholarship and other activities that directly improve undergraduate teaching |

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PROVIDING ACCESS AND REMEDIATION

24

### The NIE Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- offer remedial courses when necessary but set standards and employ instructional techniques that will enable students to succeed in subsequent college-level courses

### The AAC Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

(N/A)

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PROVIDING ACCESS AND REMEDIATION (Continued)**

| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| (N/A) | (N/A) | • better prepare minorities for success in high school and college<br>• take steps to attract better students to teacher-education programs<br>• require that higher education establish statewide standards for placement in college courses creditable toward an undergraduate degree<br>• require that threshold placement standards and procedures to assess them are consistent statewide<br>• ensure that underprepared students have geographical access to remedial programs | • better prepare minorities for success in high school and college<br>• take steps to attract better students to teacher-education programs<br>• allow credit for graduation only for college-level courses, and not for remedial courses<br>• develop content guidelines, outcomes standards, and assessment procedures that reflect the minimum level of skills needed to begin college-level courses<br>• work closely with the public schools to define and publicize what constitutes college-preparatory work<br>• work closely with the public schools to develop early assessment procedures for identifying students most |

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PROVIDING ACCESS AND REMEDIATION (Continued)**

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**The SREB Reports (Continued)**

| What states can do | What colleges and universities should do |
|---|---|
| | likely not to qualify for college-level courses |
| | • work closely with the public schools to intervene in and enrich the high-school programs of underprepared students |
| | • work closely with the public schools to inform each public-school district of the college performance of its graduates, especially the numbers requiring remedial work |

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

### The NIE Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- encourage faculty to make greater use of active modes of teaching and require that students take greater responsibility for their learning
- encourage faculty to develop and use learning technologies that will increase the amount of student/faculty contact
- strive to create learning communities, organized around specific intellectual themes or tasks
- provide adequate fiscal support, space, and recognition to existing cocurricular programs for maximizing student (including part-time and commuter) involvement
- offer systematic program of guidance and advisement for students from matriculation through graduation

### The AAC Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- explore what is currently known about learning and what practices have been developed that best support a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning
- ensure that students are guided by informed faculty advice and supervision
- encourage students and faculty to find ways to integrate the course of study with the extra-curriculum and the cultural environment
- encourage students and faculty to integrate the course of study with community service, political participation, and other opportunities for civic responsibility
- interact with business and industry, government, the arts, and the professions in ways that will enrich the undergraduate curriculum

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING STUDENT INVOLVEMENT (Continued)**

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| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| (N/A) | (N/A) | (N/A) | (N/A) |

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING TEACHER EDUCATION

### The NIE Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- balance specialization of graduate training in the disciplines by requiring graduate-school applicants to show evidence of a broad undergraduate education
- develop ways of helping prospective faculty learn about the history, organization, and culture of American higher education
- find ways of helping prospective faculty develop their understanding of teaching and learning

### The AAC Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- assert the set of skills and obligations necessary to the practice and profession of college teaching
- ensure that the Ph.D. candidate is introduced in a systematic way to the profession of teaching
- demonstrate commitment to teaching by offering a program that helps new faculty improve their teaching

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING TEACHER EDUCATION (Continued)**

## The NEH Report

### What states should do

(N/A)

### What colleges and universities should do

(N/A)

## The SREB Reports

### What states should do

- promote reforms in teacher-education programs in public colleges and universities
- guide and monitor improvements in teacher education as well as in certification regulations
- make improvement in teacher preparation an urgent agenda item for coordinating agencies, governing boards, and college and university presidents
- explore alternative teacher-education and certification models that emphasize the development of teaching skills primarily in the school classroom setting
- hold fast to minimum admissions standards but find ways to attract better students to teacher-education programs

### What colleges and universities should do

- explore alternative teacher-education and certification models that emphasize development of teaching skills primarily in the school classroom setting
- hold fast to minimum admissions standards but find ways to attract better students to teacher-education programs
- reemphasize preservice preparation of teachers in research universities that tend to attract the more talented students
- provide opportunities throughout the curriculum for education majors to gain practical, hands-on experience (e.g., student teaching)
- consider alternative approaches to teacher training (e.g., the master of arts in teaching for arts-and-science graduates)

## The SREB Reports (Continued)

### What states should do

- encourage leaders in minority communities to mount a comprehensive campaign to recruit qualified minority students into teacher-education programs
- expect colleges and universities to adopt a common set of basic academic skills and levels of proficiency that all students should meet by the end of their sophomore year and before beginning upper-division study

### What colleges and universities should do

- prescribe acceptable general education courses for education majors regardless of their academic major
- consolidate "methods" courses for education majors, integrating methods and materials with information about child development and learning theory
- require elementary education majors to take upper-division courses in academic disciplines
- require elementary education majors planning to teach upper grades to complete an academic major
- redesign introductory courses on the history, philosophy, and sociology of education in ways that delve deeply into the component subjects
- examine curricular content for secondary education majors in

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**The SREB Reports (Continued)**

| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
|---|---|
| | relation to the teachers' potential assignments in high schools |
| | • encourage education majors to take more upper-division courses and more courses in different disciplines |
| | • include courses on the history, philosophy, and sociology of education in graduate in-service programs for experienced teachers |
| | • ensure that education faculty have prolonged and regular contacts with the public schools at appropriate intervals |
| | • expect students to exceed threshold requirements (basic academic skills and levels of proficiency) before beginning upper-division |

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM AND FACULTY

### The NIE Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- examine and adjust the content and delivery of the curriculum to match the knowledge, capacities, and skills they expect students to develop
- agree upon and disseminate a statement of the knowledge, capacities, and skills that students must develop prior to graduation
- require all bachelor's degree recipients to have at least two full years of liberal education
- expand liberal education requirements to ensure that students and faculty integrate knowledge from various disciplines
- expand liberal education requirements to ensure that emphasis is given to the development of capacities of analysis, problem-solving, communication, and synthesis as well as to subject matter



### The AAC Report

**What states should do**

(N/A)

**What colleges and universities should do**

- expect institutional leaders to identify curricular issues that require attention and to shape a strategy to move the faculty to responsible action
- expect curriculum committees to consider whether the curriculum as experienced by a student meets the goals of the institution or society's goals, more broadly defined
- expect curriculum committees to resist a too-ready acquiescence to the ambitions of every faculty special-interest group
- expect curriculum committees to challenge some of the fundamental assumptions and practices of the academy
- ensure that curriculum committees are "a vehicle of institutional integrity and purpose"

**The AAC Report (Continued)**

| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
|---|---|
| | • consider a variety of ways in which faculty can fulfill their responsibilities to the undergraduate curriculum<br>• develop a minimum required curriculum for all undergraduate students that includes nine essential elements<br>• ensure that emphasis is placed on opportunities for active learning<br>• ensure that every requirement for "study in depth" (the undergraduate major) is intellectually defensible<br>• ensure that students are exposed to a variety of pedagogical approaches<br>• redesign old courses and design new ones that reflect the goals and experiences of the minimum required curriculum for all students |

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM AND FACULTY (Continued)**

| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| (N/A) | • ensure that the best professors teach introductory and lower-division courses that are designed for the nonmajor and part of a coherent curriculum<br>• extend study of the humanities throughout the entire undergraduate experience<br>• expect faculty to be as concerned with teaching nonmajors as with signing up departmental majors<br>• ensure that the undergraduate curriculum reflects the best judgment of the president, deans, and faculty about what an educated person ought to know<br>• ensure that choices with regard to a common curriculum are rooted in institutional identity and educational purpose<br>• ensure that graduates are conversant with the best | • hold colleges and universities accountable for specifying the academic skills and knowledge that students should possess before receiving their undergraduate degrees | (N/A) |

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM AND FACULTY (Continued)

### The NEH Report (Continued)

| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
|---|---|
| | that has been thought and written about the human condition |
| | • ensure that faculty make the humanities come alive by helping students confront great texts, great minds, and great ideas |
| | • expect presidents to take firm stands on what their institutions regard as essential knowledge |
| | • ensure that graduate students are prepared to teach undergraduates as well as to be researchers and scholars |
| | • ensure that graduate students are broadly educated in fields of knowledge other than their primary one |
| | • ensure that, as scholars, graduate students are able to ask questions of wide significance as well as pursue research of narrow scope |

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

### The NIE Report

**What states should do**

- minimize intrusions of administrative and fiscal agencies into the daily and routine operations of public colleges and universities
- expect accrediting agencies to hold colleges and universities accountable for clear statements of expectations for student learning, appropriate means of assessing student performance, and systematic efforts to improve learning based on assessment results

**What colleges and universities should do**

- ensure that institutional behavior evidences the ideals of honesty, justice, freedom, equality, respect for others and generosity — the necessary values of community
- design and implement systematic programs for assessing student knowledge, capacities, and skills developed in academic and cocurricular programs
- ensure that assessment instruments and procedures are appropriate for the knowledge, capacities, and skills addressed, and for the stated objectives of undergraduate education
- involve faculty in the development, adoption, administration, and scoring of instruments and procedures used in student assessment



### The AAC Report

**What states should do**

- hold colleges and universities accountable for demonstrating effectiveness in each of three areas: students, programs, faculty
- encourage accrediting agencies and boards of trustees to ask searching questions about academic-program quality and about program consistency with institutional mission
- hold colleges and universities accountable for developing reliable instruments for student assessment and program evaluation

**What colleges and universities should do**

- establish joint committees (trustees, faculty, students) on assessment to oversee legitimate group interests and responsibilities
- through curriculum committees, engage in a continuing assessment of the quality of teaching across the curriculum

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY (Continued)

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### The NIE Report (Continued)

What states should do

What colleges and universities should do

- train faculty in the use of assessment as a teaching tool
- regularly conduct student evaluations of academic programs and the learning environment, and disseminate the results as a basis for improving undergraduate education
- supplement credit system with proficiency assessments in liberal education and in the student's major as a condition of awarding degrees

**RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY (Continued)**

| The NEH Report | | The SREB Reports | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What states should do | What colleges and universities should do | What states should do | What colleges and universities should do |
| (N/A) | • expect presidents to set an intellectual tone for their institutions, articulating goals and ideals | (N/A) | (N/A) |



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# WORKING PARTY ON EFFECTIVE STATE ACTION TO IMPROVE UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

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Governor of New Jersey
Chair

**Kenneth J. Ashworth**
Commissioner, Coordinating Board
Texas College and University System

**J. Herman Blake**
President, Tougaloo College
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**Patrick M. Callan**
Director, California Postsecondary
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**John H. Casteen III**
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**The Honorable William Clinton**
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**The Honorable Wilhemina Delco**
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**Harold Enarson**
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